DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 365 609 SO 023 652

AUTHOR Thomas, R. Murray
TITLE The Nature of Values Education in Southeast Asia.
PUB DATE [91]
NOTE 18p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; Cross Cultural Studies; Cultural Influences; Elementary Secondary Education; *Ethical Instruction; Foreign Countries; *Instructional Improvement; *Moral Values
IDENTIFIERS *Asia (Southeast); Philippines

ABSTRACT

In recent years, concern in several Southeast Asian nations about the deterioration of values within their societies has resulted in renewed efforts to teach values by means of special courses in the schools. This paper compares the current programs of values education in four of the nations: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Phillipines, and Singapore. The comparison centers on the motives behind efforts to improve values education, types of values emphasized, strategies for promoting the values, and problems encountered in such educational programs. Historical and statistical data on each of the four countries provide a setting within which official statements concerning moral education programs' particular topics undergo scrutiny. (Contains 2 tables and 23 references.) (Author/SG)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 365 609

Abstract

# The Nature of Values Education in Southeast Asia

R. Murray Thomas
University of California, Santa Barbara

In recent years, concern in several Southeast Asian nations about the deterioration of values within their societies has resulted in renewed efforts to teach values by means of special courses in the schools. This paper compares the current programs of values education in four of the nations —Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. The comparison centers on (1) the motives behind efforts to improve values education, (2) types of values emphasized, (3) strategies for promoting the values, and (4) problems encountered in such educational programs.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Y This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
R. MURRAY THOMAS

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO 023 652



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# The Nature of Moral Education in Southeast Asia

R. Murray Thomas
University of California, Santa Barbara

A traditional concern in Asian Societies with the moral development of children and youths has, in recent times, assumed the form of increased attention to formal moral-education programs in the schools. One of the most obvious indicators of this heightened interest has been a series of six seminars on moral education cosponsored by Japan's National Institute for Educational Research and the Unesco Regional Office in Bangkok. The seminars, conducted over the period 1975-1990, have been attended by representatives of more than a dozen nations of Asia and the Southwestern Pacific (NIER, 1981; NIER, 1990). The seminars have provided participants the opportunity to compare their societies' moral-education goals and values, instructional methods and materials, evaluation techniques, and teacher-education provisions.

The purpose of this paper is, first, to identify goals and moral-values that seminar delegates agreed were common to all of the countries represented at the latest of the seminars and, second, to use this set of common goals and values as a vantage point from which to view the moral-education programs of four Southeast Asian nations —Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. The portion of the paper focusing on the four countries centers on (1) the apparent motives behind each nation's efforts to improve moral education, (2) kinds of values emphasized in the programs, and (3) strategies adopted for promoting the values.

## Moral-Education Goals and Values

In the series of intergovernmental seminars held in Tokyo, a key issue addressed by participants was the question of how the term *moral education* should be defined and what specific values should be treated in moral-education programs. It became apparent in the discussions that conceptions of *moral education* differed somewhat from one nation's education system to another's. However, delegates attending the 1990 seminar did concur on six very general goals that their education systems' moral education programs should pursue. That is, they agreed that moral-education programs should promote the development of:

1. The whole person —spiritual, social, physical, emotional, intellectual, and moral dimensions.
2. A sense of community which includes concern for individuals and groups.
3. Society, which includes: (a) citizenship education and the promotion of democratic and cultural values and (b) political awareness.
4. National identify, loyalty, and unity.
5. Understanding and concern for the global community.
6. Sensitivity and a discriminating response to moral issues related to all of the above goals —1 through 5 (NIER, 1990, p. 4).

In addition to suggesting that their countries' moral-education programs should be designed to promote progress toward the six goals, the participants compiled a list of specific values which were "fostered in most school systems" and they identified which values contributed toward which goals, as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

**Moral Values That Contribute to the Achievement of Moral Goals**

| *Values* | *Goals* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1* *Whole Person* | *2* *Community* | *3* *Society* | *4* *Nation* | *5* *World* | *6* *Sensitive Response* |
| Spirituality | x | x | | | | |
| Love | x | x | | | | |
| Equity | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Justice | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Truth | x | x | x | | | |
| Freedom | x | x | x | x | | |
| Modesty | x | x | x | | | |
| Tolerance | x | x | x | | | |
| Perseverance | x | | | | | |
| Self-esteem | x | | | | | |
| Self-reliance | x | | | | | |
| Compassion | x | x | x | | | |
| Responsibility | x | x | x | x | | |
| Cooperation | x | x | x | x | | |
| Concern for the environment | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Peaceful conflict resolution | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Family harmony | x | x | x | | | |
| Respect for authority | x | x | | | | |
| Loyalty | x | x | x | x | | |
| Gratitude | x | | | | | |
| Generosity | x | | | | | |
| Self-discipline | x | | | | | |
| Courage | x | x | | | | |
| Sportsmanship | x | x | | | | |
| Punctuality | x | | | | | |
| Social responsibility | x | x | x | x | | |
| Respect for parents | x | x | x | | | |
| Economic efficiency | | | x | x | | |
| Valuing of cultural heritage | | x | x | x | | |
| Public spirit | | x | x | x | | |
| National pride | | | | x | x | |
| Global solidarity | | | | | x | |
| Concern for the international community | | | | | x | |
| Sense of right and wrong | | | | | | x |

(Source: NIER, 1990, p. 5)

Before using these goals and values as a background against which to place the analysis of moral-education in our four illustrative nations, I believe if is useful to consider the manner in which the goals and values were compiled. The two lists are the product of group workshop sessions whose membership was comprised of representatives of the participating countries. It would appear that those in charge of the discussions endeavored to accommodate the viewpoints of all of the delegates without revising or editing-out the wording of values that might be phrased one way in one nation and a different way in another. As Table 1 indicates, the list of values is quite long, and certain ones conceivably overlap with others (example: *global solidarity* and *concern for the international community*). In short, the list appears to be inclusive, encompassing all of the values that were suggested in the sessions, whether or not those values were ones particularly promoted in individual countries' programs. The fact that the list is extensive renders it useful as a foundation for our later comparison of the values fostered in the moral-education programs of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore.

A second aspect of the list that is worth noting is that certain items which often appear in other sets of moral values are missing even from such an extensive list. For example, *honesty* and *self-sacrifice* or *altruism* are not mentioned. However, such virtues as honesty and altruism perhaps are thought to be implied in other values in the list. Possibly delegates would subsume *honesty* under *truth* and place *altruism* under *compassion* or *public spirit* or *concern for the world*.

A third noteworthy characteristic of the values list is its apparent lack of greater emphasis on one value than on another. That is, the values do not seem to be listed in order of importance, with the most significant at the top and the least significant at the bottom. As far as I can tell, the organization of the listing is rather arbitrary, and the assignment of values to the six goal-areas is debatable in a number of instances. In effect, the lack of emphasis on particular values likely was the result of differences of opinion across the participating countries, or at least across the delegates representing those countries. However, as will be suggested in the analysis of our four sample nations, this apparent absence of priorities in the master values list does not mean that within a particular country's program certain values are not stressed over others. Rather, it appears to mean that the organizers of the seminar endeavored to accommodate the convictions all participating nations without implying that one country's priorities were more worthy than another's.

With these observations before us, we turn now to the analysis of the moral-education programs in the four Southeast Asian societies, beginning with the likely motives of the formulators of those programs and continuing with an inspection of the moral values taught and of the form of the curricula.

## Apparent Motives of Moral-Education Advocates

From the rationales offered in support of the four nations' moral-education programs, and from newspaper articles and the professional literature related to such matters, it seems clear that the advocates of moral education in all four of the nations share a basic motive in common. That is, all of them wish to live in a society that is trustworthy and peaceful. By *trustworthy*, I mean that citizens can count on lawful, fair treatment in the conduct of the society. Therefore, in order to promote such conditions, moral-education programs could be expected to advocate such values as equity, justice, truth, freedom, responsibility, cooperation, and the like.

However, in addition to sharing in common such a basic motive, the individual governments' particular political, economic, and culture settings have provided additional motives that are reflected in the nature of their moral-education programs. The following brief review of such settings may serve to illustrate this point.

### Indonesia

In the early 1960s, a fierce struggle for power in Indonesia was being waged between (1) a combine of socialistic political factions led by the Indonesian Communist Party and (2) a coalition

of religious groups (with Islamic mass organizations in the forefront, supported by smaller Christian groups) and secular anti-communist parties. The country's large military establishment was divided between these two camps. Near of the end of 1965, in the midst of economic chaos, an ill-fated coup d'état that was credited to the Communists set off months of bloodshed that resulted in an estimated half-million deaths and the defeat of the Communist-led alliance. The army general who had headed the victorious coalition, Suharto, replaced Sukarno as president, and the Communist Party was outlawed, as is still the case (Thomas, 1981)..

From the perspective of moral education, the immediate effect of this event was that of instituting religious education as a required course in the curriculum at all levels of the schooling ladder. Prior to 1965, there was a provision for released time in the curriculum for religious studies each week, with a representative of each religion (Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism) teaching the children whose families subscribed to that particular faith. However, parents who wished to do so could exempt their children from religious education. In this way, communists, agnostics, atheists, and people of other philosophical persuasions could exclude their children from religious influence in the schools. However, with the defeat of the Communists, the Indonesian parliament in 1966 altered the education regulations so as to require religious education in the five officially recognized faiths.

While this move settled the conflict of convictions between the former communist forces and the coalition of religious and non-communist secular groups, it left room for a confrontation of power within that coalition. The principal combatants in that conflict were traditional Islamic groups and the new government in which the military and modernist economic-development forces (friendly to the capitalist West) vied for power. Particularly with the world-wide rise of fundamen-talist Islam in Iran and elsewhere, Muslims in Indonesia sought to win control over the government in elections and further the spread of Islamic moral/social values in the nation. (Indonesia has the largest Muslim community in the world, with 89% of the nation's 181 million inhabitants listed as followers of Islam). The modernist government (whose members are mostly Muslims, at least nominally) sought to stem this move for power and, at the same time, prevent a return of communist ideology. They accomplished this by advocating the adoption of a strong educational program in support of the Panca Sila (*pán-cha*=five, *see-lah*=principles). The five principles had been proposed in mid-1945 by Sukarno, before he was president, as the foundation for a national Indonesian philosophy. The principles had subsequently formed the core of convictions around which Indonesians would rally when they won their freedom from Dutch colonialism by means of the revolution of 1945-1949. The five principles are: *belief in God, nationalism, concern for humanity, sovereignty of the people,* and *social justice.*

During the latter 1970s and the 1980s, as the more fundamentalist Muslims pressed for establishing the nation as an Islamic state, the government instituted in every school at every grade level a special course entitled *Moral Panca Sila.* In addition, all government employees were required to participate in workshops and seminars propagating Panca Sila philosophy. Muslim forces have charged that the advocates of *Moral Panca Sila* were trying to replace Islam with a state religion. Defenders of *Moral Panca Sila* have replied that the first of the principles, *belief in God,* places religion as a central pillar of the nation's philosophy, but it accords equal respect for each of the officially recognized religions. As a consequence, the religion section of school textbooks emphasizes mutual respect and tolerance of religious beliefs rather than indoctrinating students in the beliefs of one of the faiths.

In summary, the political struggle between communists and noncommunists that erupted in the civil war of 1965 led to the anticommunist content of today's moral education in the schools. Furthermore, the economic-modernizing Suharto government's success in repulsing the more fundamentalist Muslim forces' drive for power in the 1970s and 1980s has led to some reduction in the hours of released-time religious education in schools as well as to non-sectarian content in the *belief in God* component of present-day *Moral Panca Sila* classes (Thomas, 1988).

Thus, the motives of the key participants in resolving political struggles for power in Indonesia over the past three decades have exerted a strong influence over the content of Indonesia's moral education, thereby helping account for differences between Indonesia and the other three Southeast Asian nations in the emphasis placed on the particular moral values advocated in their programs.

### Malaysia

Indonesia, with 89% of its population Muslim, is officially a secular state. In contrast, Malaysia, with only 53% of its total population of 18 million adherents of Islam, is officially an Islamic state. The other principal religions in Malaysia are Buddhism 17%, Chinese folk religions 12%, Hinduism 7%, Christianity 6%. These divisions along religious lines are essentially coterminus with the ethnic divisions in the nation, where Malays and other indigenous peoples (*bumi putera*) make up 61% of the population, Chinese 30%, and Indians 8% (Daume, 1991, p. 649).

Prior to the 1960s, when the territory that is now Malaysia was still a British colonial region, the British exerted their rule over most of the area through local Malay sultans. At the same time, the large numbers of Chinese who had immigrated to the region over past years had gained a strong hold over much of the colonies' economic activity. Thus, when Malaysia gained political independence in 1963, by dint of tradition and a constitution favorable to their interests, Malays held control of the government. And since the Malays were Muslims, the new nation became an Islamic state.

Since coming to power in the early 1960s, the Malaysian government has systematically sought to promote the welfare of Muslims over the welfare of other religious groups, although the official reasons for such a policy have been cast in ethnic rather than religious terms. There has been nothing hidden about this policy. It has been described clearly both in political speeches and in the sequence of five-year national development plans which have served for charting the nation's planned growth. The rationale behind favoring Malays has been composed of two main arguments, one centering on national unity and the other on compensating Malays for wrongs ostensibly suffered under British colonialism. The national-unity argument has been that if the nation is to survive and prosper, it requires a unifying culture which all citizens share. People of all ethnic origins should pay greater allegiance to the nation than to their original ethnic group. The question, then, becomes: Of what will this unifying culture be composed? The government's official answer has been:

> The evolution of Malaysian national identity will be based on an integration of all the virtues from the various cultures in Malaysia, with the Malay culture forming its core (*Third Malaysia Plan*, 1976, p. 94).

The second argument has been that the indigenous peoples were relegated to a disadvantaged economic and educational status under British colonialism —that British "protectionist policies" kept Malays in rural areas, engaged in subsistence farming and fishing, while Chinese and Indians in greater numbers settled in the towns to enter modern economic and professional sectors and where their children could enroll in English-language schools which equipped graduates with the language skills and quality of education that provided superior opportunities for employment in government offices and in business and trade. To right such wrongs, the post-colonial Malaysian government has deemed it necessary to provide favored opportunities to Malays until such time they achieve parity with the Chinese and Indians.

The government's endeavor to produce a nationally unified Malay-centered culture and to compensate Malays for past wrongs have involved two actions bearing directly on religion and moral education. The government has financed the construction and restoration of Muslim places of worship, sponsored the publication of Muslim reading materials, appointed Islamic religious leaders to important government posts and commissions, and broadcast Quran-reading contests over national television and radio. For the field of education, pro-Muslim government policies in the mid-1980s were described in the following manner in the government's socioeconomic

development plan (*Fourth Malaysia Plan 1981-1985*, 1981, p. 354).

> Islamic religious education will continue to be compulsory for Muslim students at the primary and secondary levels. Non-Muslim students will be taught moral education and ethics during the period when Muslim students and those who choose to do so are attending classes in Islamic knowledge. The main objective of religious and moral education and ethics is to build a strong basis for developing a disciplined society with high moral values.

In the latter 1970s, Hasan (1978, pp. 77-80) reported that all of the nation's five universities were moving toward "accommodating a greater portion of Islamic knowledge of Islamic studies in the curricula" in order to "regulate students' behavior and curb permissiveness on campus" as well as to satisfy "leaders of the Muslim community who are concerned about the influence of drug abuse and Communist teachings —the two are not unrelated— on the campuses." By the mid-1980s these pressures had succeeded, and all university students were required to include a class in Islam in their course of study (Whiting, 1984).

In summary, over the nearly three decades since the nation of Malaysia was established, the government has constantly passed regulations designed to strengthen the Islamic character of the population. These efforts have been accentuated by the resurgence of fundamentalist fervor that has spread through the Muslim world since the early 1970s and particularly since the Ayatollah Khomeini took over the reins of government in Iran in 1979. By the latter-1980s the Malaysian government was still under the control of religious and racial moderates who sought to resist strong pressure from Islamic extremists who wanted more Quranic doctrine injected into laws and public policies, including policies bearing on religious and moral education. However, there were still very active Muslim extremists, particularly in the northern Malaysian states, who would like to see Malaysia administered along strict Quranic lines.

The school program labeled *Moral Education* is the one followed by students who do not attend the Islamic religious-education classes. In the preamble to the moral-education syllabus, a motive underlying the need for such a program is described as concern for "observed instances of indiscipline in schools, disrespect for elders, vandalism and increase in crime, destructive demonstrations, drug abuse, and violations of individual and societal rights" (Mukherjee, 1988, p. 152).

Thus, moral-education policies in Malaysia have been influenced not only by motives common to all four of our Southeast Asian nations —a desire to maintain peaceful, trustworthy societies— but have been stimulated as well by strong political forces that would have moral education coincide with Islamic doctrine. These desires are reflected directly in the Islamic religion classes and are partially reflected in the contents of the religious-education program.

### The Philippines

The recent upsurge of attention to moral education in the Philippines was precipitated by the 1986 ousting of the corrupt, repressive Ferdinand Marcos regime and the election of Corazon Aquino to head the government.

> Right after the February Revolution in 1986, there was a general feeling that education should further enhance its contribution to the rebuilding of the nation. The consensus was that it could play a central role in the social transformation of the country and that it could effect this change by reexamining and strengthening its values education program which it started when implementing the New Elementary School Curriculum in 1983 (Sutaria, 1989, pp. 104-105).

With the departure of the Marcos government and the creation of a new constitution in 1987:

> A new hope, a new vision and a new direction emerged as there was more democratic space, [so] a new national values education program was introduced in the same year which reinforced the existing values education earlier introduced in 1982 by the Department of Education, Cultural, and Sports to provide and

promote values education in all three levels of the education system for the development of a human person committed the building of a "just and humane society and an independent and democratic nation" [as described in the] Preamble of the 1987 Constitution (NIER, 1990, p. 91).

The constitution directly obligates all educational institutions to "include as part of the curricula the inculcation of patriotism and nationalism, fostering of love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of the national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technical knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency" (NIER, 1990, p. 92).

Reflecting this same moral theme in the realm of public service, a 1989 official act, entitled Rules Implementing the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials, was adopted by the Philippine government emphasizing "ethical and moral values; rights, duties, and responsibilities of public servants; nationalism and patriotism; justice and human rights; commitment to responsiveness to the public, simple living, and transparency" (NIER, 1990, p. 91).

In addition to the stimulus to moral education provided by the replacement of the Marcos government, two further facets of contemporary life in the Philippines have affected people's perception of values education.

First is the dominant religious tradition inherited from the days of Spanish colonialism. By the 1980s, the population was 84% Roman Catholic, 6% Aglipayan (Philippine Independent Church), 4% Muslim, and 4% Protestant Christian. Thus, a strong strain of Catholic theological and ethical conviction is found in the society.

Second is the desire of many Filipinos to be freed of the continued neocolonial ties to the United States. Since the end of World War II, a substantial U.S. military presence has remained in the islands, bringing with it an ambivalent attitude on the part of the Philippine government and the populace. On the one hand, the U.S. military bases have added to the nation's income and offered protection from attack by neighboring countries' armed forces. On the other hand, the continued presence of the U.S. —in both the military and commercial fields— has placed Filipinos in a position of subservience, a position seldom enjoyed by citizens of an ostensibly sovereign nation. Therefore, over the past few decades increasing pressure has been exerted to free the country from such close ties to the U.S. In 1990 the Philippine government served notice on the United States that its agreement to use military bases in the Philippines would end in late 1991. However, the U.S. negotiated for a ten-year period to phase out the bases (Bradsher, 1991, p. 440).

In summary, three societal conditions contributing to the motives behind the types of values included in present-day moral education programs in the Philippines have been (1) a renewed spirit of justice and freedom occasioned by the replacement of the Marcos government, (2) a continuing influence of Catholicism, and (3) a desire of Filipinos to end its neocolonial status and become a sovereign nation, unbeholden to any foreign power.

### Singapore

Singapore, as a city-state at the southern tip of the Malay peninsula, is an early 19th century British colonial creation that became part of Malaysia when that nation was created in 1963. However, conflicts between political leaders of the Chinese-dominated Singapore and of the Malay-dominated Malay states that comprised Western Malaysia brought about Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965. Since that time, Singapore and the remaining components of Malaysia have gone their own ways as separate sovereign states.

By 1990, the ethnic composition of Singapore's 2.7 million citizens was 76% Chinese, 15% Malay, 6.5% Indian, and 2.5% other groups. In religious affiliation, the populace was 28% Buddhist, 19% Christian, 16% Muslim, 13% Taoist, 5% Hindu, and 19% non-religious (Daume, 1991, p. 698).

In terms of territory, Singapore is minuscule —240 square miles— and virtually devoid of natural resources other than a good seaport at the crossroads of the China-India sea-trade route. To survive and thrive economically, the nation has had to depend on the diligence of its people and the ingenuity of its political and economic leaders. The government of Singapore operates as a tightly controlled, secular, capitalistic meritocracy whose prosperity has depended on efficiently serving the world of international commerce and industry, undisturbed by political dissent.

Since the mid-1970s, issues of moral values have been the center of a continuing debate in the public press, a debate engaging the active participation of government officials and the general public. Open forums have been conducted by the government in an effort to stimulate discussion about values and to inform the government of the public's views. The controversy has been of special concern to educators, since the formal and nonformal education systems are assigned much of the burden of implementing solutions that result from the debate.

Gopinathan (1988, p. 134) identified the direct motives underlying these activities as being "a genuine fear" on the part of the government that Western societies' longhaired hippies'

> youth subculture of alienation, hedonistic self-expression fed by drugs and the rock music revolution was attractive and therefore potentially corruptive of Singapore youth: in the words of one official, "the philosophy of patched-up jeans and patached-up souls" was not the model to emulate. Official characterization then of the attitudes of Singapore's youths —materialistic, unwilling to sacrifice or to put nation before self, even unfilial— implied that corruption had already taken root. In a 1980 survey of life values of 1878 youths in secondary schools it was reported what characterized these youths were their selfishness, a value vacuum, and the possession of a "self-interested morality."

Thus, the central issue of the continuing debate became: What values should the political state adopt as guiding principles to unite the populace in pursuing a just and prosperous future?

In 1979 a government-appointed committee on moral education reported that the principal objective of the nation's moral-education program "should be to produce good, useful and loyal citizens through inculcation of the desired moral values and social attitudes" (Ong Teng Cheong et al., 1979, p. 8). The committee report then quoted Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's description of the ideal Singaporean as one

> who can live, work, contend, and cooperate in a civilized way. Is he loyal and patriotic? Is he, when the need arises, a good soldier, ready to defend his country, and so protect his wife and children, and his fellow citizens? Is he filial, respectful of his elders, law-abiding, humane, and responsible? . . . Is he a good neighbor and a trustworthy friend. Is he tolerant of Singaporeans of different races and religions/ Is he clean, neat, punctual, and well-mannered? (Ong Teng Cheong et al., 1979, p. 8),

By the early 1980s a new syllabus for primary and secondary schools in the required subject of moral education was prepared, and religious knowledge (including a comparative knowledge of religious beliefs) became a required subject focusing on the Bible, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Confucian ethics, and Sikh studies (Gopinathan, 1988, p. 139). (In 1990 the religious knowledge offering would be changed from a compulsory to an elective subject.)

By the latter 1980s the focus of the continuing debate became the question of what values should comprise the national philosophy and, particularly, how traditional Asian values should contribute to this philosophy. To grasp something of the flavor of the discussion of this issue, consider the following quotations from articles in the leading newspaper of the region,*The Straits Times*.[1]

> Dr. Tony Tan said. . . "some [values], like honesty and hard work, are universal. But others, like filial piety

[1] I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to Joseph Stimpfl for his sending me a constant stream of valuable newspaper articles on moral values during his months of research in Singapore in the late 1980s.

and putting society before self, find greater expression in Asian societies than in Western ones" (Gasmier, 1988, p. 40).

[Prof. Jayakumar] singled out four obstacles which made it difficult for Singaporeans in maintaining Asian values: (1) youth's exposure to Western television programs which project totally different values and norms concerning marriage, divorce, sex, and family life, (2) the housing program which has led to married couples moving out of their parents' homes early, (3) the education system which has resulted in most young people being educated in English, with their mother tongue a second language, and (4) more mothers joining the work force (Davie, 1988, p. 1).

Thirteen young professionals (doctors, lawyers, engineers) were invited to the Ministry of Community Development to give their views on [the question of a] national ideology. . . . Among the values they thought should be included was commitment to multiracialism. . . . Clementi Town Secondary School submitted seven bound volumes [of opinions about values] from its students, a total of 1,380 submissions. Filial piety, courtesy, concern for the less fortunate, and a well-educated citizenry were the themes most commonly cited by students. Unlike the adults, very few of the teenagers mentioned multiracialism as a desirable component of the national ideology (Values Should Be Universal, 1988).

Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew identified two basic values that Singaporeans should retain to secure the country's long-term future —(1) put society's interests above the individual's and (2) preserve the family as the basic unit of society (Daniel, 1988).

Now that we are economically prosperous and stable, it is opportune for us to call for the formulation and acceptance of core values by all Singaporeans so that not only will our current prosperity be sustained, [but] we can begin to strengthen the bond and cohesion of our heterogeneous, multiracial polity. . . . Proposed core values: (1) belief in a multiracial, mutireligious, and multicultural society, (2) service beyond self (communitarianism), (3) respect for justice and equity (4) respect for a consensual and representative democracy, (5) love for parents and care for the less fortunate (Mutalib, 1988).

As this smattering of excerpts suggests, a key motive behind the formulation of moral-education programs in Singapore has been that of maintaining a peaceful, secular state whose citizens (1) respect each other's racial, religious, and cultural traditions, (2) respect parents and other authority figures, (3) work diligently, amicably, and cooperatively so as to maintain a prosperous economy, and (4) place the welfare of the society before their own personal gain.

### Conclusion

The foregoing sketch of selected societal conditions in the four Southeast Asian countries can now serve as a setting within which to inspect statements of the specific moral values which those countries have featured in their moral-education programs.

## Values Featured in Moral-Education Curricula — Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore

Table 2 is intended to provide a convenient way of comparing the specific values on which the four nations' moral-education programs focus. The order of items in the table follows the pattern introduced earlier in Table 1 (page 2 of this paper). Section A of Table 2 is comprised of values found in one or more moral education programs of our four Southeast Asian nations, values that were also included in the original Table 1 list that derived from the 1990 international seminar in Tokyo. Section B lists values found in one or more of our sample nations, but ones that did not appear in the Tokyo seminar list. Section C consists of values appearing in Table 1 but not found in the sources used for compiling values for the moral-education programs of the four Southeast Asian societies.

Table 2

**Values Espoused in Moral-Education Programs of Four Southeast Asian Nations**

| *Values** | *Indonesia* | *Malaysia* | *Philippines* | *Singapore* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Section A — Values listed in Table 1*** | | | | |
| Spiriituality —Faith in God | | | x | |
| Love | | | x | x |
| Equity, equality | | | x | x |
| Justice | x | x | | x |
| Truth | | | x | |
| Freedom | x | x | x | |
| Modesty, humility | | x | | x |
| Tolerance | x | x | | |
| Perseverance | | | | x |
| Self-esteem, self-respect | | | x | x |
| Self-reliance | | | x | |
| Compassion | | x | | |
| Responsibility | x | x | x | |
| Cooperation | x | x | | x |
| Concern for the environment | x | | | |
| Peaceful conflict resolution | | | x | |
| Respect for authority | | x | | |
| Loyalty, fidelity | | | x | x |
| Gratitude | | x | x | |
| Generosity | | | | x |
| Courage | | x | | x |
| Punctuality | | | | x |
| Social responsibility | | | x | |
| Respect for parents, filial piety | x | x | | x |
| Economic efficiency | | | x | |
| Valuing of cultural heritage | | | | x |
| Public spirit | | x | | |
| National pride (patriotism) | x | x | x | x |
| Global solidarity | | | x | |

(Source: NIER, 1990, p. 5)

Table 2 continued

| *Values** | *Indonesia* | *Malaysia* | *Philippines* | *Singapore* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Section B —Values not appearing in Table 1*** | | | | |
| Diligence/ work ethic | x | x | x | x |
| Politeness | x | | | |
| Honesty, integrity | x | x | x | x |
| Law-abidingness —obey rules | x | | | x |
| Fraternal love —help others | x | | x | |
| Friendliness —help neighbors | x | | | |
| Godliness —honor & obey God. | x | x | x | |
| Cleanliness of body and mind | | x | x | x |
| Health/hygiene | | | x | x |
| Moderation | | x | | |
| Rationality | | x | | |
| Democratic spirit | | | x | x |
| Respect for human rights | | | x | |
| Harmony with the material universe | | | x | |
| Creative and critical thinking | | | x | |
| Personal identity | | | | x |
| Dignity in labor | | | | x |
| Courtesy | | | | x |
| Thrift | | | x | x |
| Physical fitness | | | x | x |
| Personal discipline | | | x | |
| Integrity | | | | x |
| Incorruptibility | | | | x |
| Patience | | | | x |
| Kindness | | | | x |
| Forgiveness | | | | x |
| Trust | | | | x |
| Impartiality | | | | x |
| Civic consciousness | | | | x |
| Care for public property | | | | x |
| Neighborliness | | | | x |
| Friendship | | | | x |
| Respect for others' beliefs | | | | x |
| Appreciation of forefathers' role in nation-building | | | | x |
| Understanding threats to nation's survival and prosperity | | | | x |

***Section C —Values from Table 1 not found in the four nations' sources***

Family harmony, self-discipline, sportsmanship, concern for the international community, sense of right and wrong.

Table 2 continued

---

*Sources of nations' moral-education values:

Indonesia —*Pendidikan Moral Pancasila,* Vols. 1-6. (1982-83) Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (moral education textbook series, grades 1-6).

Malaysia —(1) The country's moral-education syllabus as summarized in NIER, 1990, pp. 68-69. The syllabus provides topics to be studied in the moral-education classes by students who do not attend the regular Islamic religious-studies classes. (2) Hena Mukherjee (1988) "Moral Education in a Developing Society: The Malaysian Case." In W. K. Cummings, S. Gopinathan, & Y. Tomoda (Eds.), *The Revival of Values Education in Asia and the West.* Oxford: Pergamon.

Philippines — (1) *Medium-term Philippine Development Plan 1987-1992* (1986) Manila: Government of the Philippines, pp. 205-206; (2) NIER, 1990, pp. 92-93; (3) Minda C. Sutaria. (1989) "Values Education Framework." In Minda C. Sutaria, Juanita S. Guerrero, & Paulina M. Castaño (Eds.), *Philippine Education: Visions and Perspectives.* Manila: National Book Store, pp. 104-129.

Singapore —(1) Ong Teng Cheong, et al. (1979) *Report on Moral Education.* Singapore: Ministry of Education. (2) *Moral Education —Primary and Secondary School Syllabuses* (1984) Singapore: Ministry of Education.

---

Inspecting Table 2 has led me to the following three observations:

1. The degree of consensus regarding the values taught in moral-education programs of the nations participating in the 1990 seminar in Tokyo is not nearly so great as readers might assume from viewing Table 1. As Table 2 illustrates, there appears to be a very uneven pattern of agreement on values across the four Southeast Asian nations. I would suggest several likely reasons for the discrepancies between Table 1 and Table 2. First, the country papers prepared by delegates attending the seminar apparently formed the basis of the Table-1 listing; and the copies of those papers published in the seminar report indicates that the lists of values in the delegates' submissions was not as complete as the values included in the more basic sources I had available for compiling Table 2. Second, the editorial committee that prepared Table 1 during the seminar, in order to produce a list that seemed reasonably concise, perhaps combined certain value-concepts that were worded somewhat differently in different nations. In any event, the Table 2 list is considerably longer and more variegated than that of Table 1 and offers a different impression of the extent of similarity of values across nations.

2. Seeing a list of values in the form of single words or brief phrases (*truth, freedom, loyalty,* and the like) provides very little information about how these virtues are presented in textbooks or taught in the classroom. It is possible that the amount of similarity across countries could be greater than Table 2 suggests if in one program the concept of *loyalty* is illustrated with the same sort of examples as the concept of *patriotism* or *responsibility* in another program. Therefore, a more accurate comparison of the values espoused in different programs can be gained from an inspection of textbooks and visits to classrooms than is derived from an inspection of values listed in the form of single words or brief phrases. A further limitation in judging the comparability of programs is the lack of information in lists of values regarding how much emphasis is placed on one value as compared to another. This matter of emphasis is also best judged by an analysis of moral-education reading materials and by visits to moral-education classrooms.

3. An impression of the range of values and the degree of emphasis on certain values in a school system's curriculum will be more accurate if all of the subject-matter areas in which values are taught are included in the analysis. The values presented in both Tables 1 and 2 are ones appearing mainly in the course of study for classes labeled *moral education.* In each of our four illustrative

nations, a listing of values taught in the *religious education* or *religious knowledge* classes might well alter the impression given of the range and emphasis suggested in the two tables. Furthermore, it seems likely that the contents of classes labeled *history* or *social studies* would be designed to espouse such values as patriotism, respect for cultural heritage, civic consciousness, global solidarity, and the like.

## Strategies for Promoting Moral Values in the Four Nations

The principal approach adopted for furthering values education in the four countries has been that of creating a specific course in schools that focuses on the selected moral values, then urging teachers of other subject fields to insert values education into their instructional programs wherever feasible. The four nations have supplemented these in-school provisions with nonformal and informal educational efforts via the mass-communication media, religious organizations, youth clubs, and the like. The following examples illustrate more specifically how each of the countries has utilized such channels of instruction.

### Indonesia

At all levels of the schooling hierarchy, moral values are taught in two types of required classes —the released time religious-education classes for two periods a week (totaling 90 minutes) and the Moral Pancasila classes for another two periods. Syllabi for teachers and textbooks for students have been prepared by the Ministry of Education for use in the Moral Pancasila classes at each grade level. An analysis of these materials indicates that they place a heavy emphasis on patriotism, including the expected role of good Indonesian citizens and historical and political aspects of the nation's struggle for independence from colonial control (*Pendidikan Moral Pancasila*, 1982-1983; NIER, 1990, pp. 54-55). The aim of the curriculum is to produce "Indonesians with integrated personalities, who love their country and are future-oriented, able to live up to Pancasila values and morals throughout their entire lives and have a sense of belonging to a unified nation" (NIER, 1990, p 55).

### Malaysia

In Malaysia the new moral-education curriculum, prepared by the nation's Curriculum Development Center, was introduced into the lower-primary grades in 1983, for all non-Muslim pupils, while the Muslim pupils attended religious-education classes. The curriculum was then gradually introduced into upper grade levels until finally implemented in 1989 in secondary schools.

> Handbooks prepared for teachers at every class level attempt to indicate the concepts [that the] values or "labels" [such as cooperation, courage, diligence] are intended to encapsulate by breaking them down into specific objectives accompanied by suggested content and activities for the class. In principle, these various sets of objectives are expected to be seen as intermeshing and not exclusive. . . . Perhaps the notion of the spiral curriculum clarifies the kinds of connection and association both teacher and pupil are expected to make over the entire programme. For instance, activities planned for the unit on cooperation will have meaning for the unit on public-spiritedness at the same class level. In terms of vertical or spiral development of the curriculum, cooperation and public-spiritedness may be seen in terms of the immediate family and neighbourhood at the lower primary level, expanding to include the country and its immediate neighbours at the upper primary level, and moving out to embrace consideration of the world in terms of mankind in general (Mukherjee, 1988, pp. 153-154).

The plan to furnish teachers only the syllabus and a limited number of prototype materials, and not to develop textbooks for pupils, was criticized by teachers as leaving them to bear the burden

of creating class activities and content material (Mukherjee, 1988, p. 154).

### Philippines

The new values-education program under the Aquino government is intended for all grade levels from the elementary school into higher education. The moral-education curricula are designed to fit into the general roles assigned to values education at the elementary and secondary school levels. For the elementary school, the mission of values education is to provide children with:

> basic preparation that will make the individual an enlightened, disciplined, nationalistic, God-loving, creative, versatile, self-reliant and productive citizen in a national community (NIER, 1990, p. 93).

The general goal of values education in secondary schools is to develop in students:

> an enlightened commitment to the national ideals by cherishing, preserving, and developing moral, spiritual, and socio-cultural values as well as other desirable aspects of the Filipino heritage (NIER, 1990, p. 93).

Values education as a separate subject in elementary schools was introduced over the latter years of the 1980s, then initiated into the first year of secondary schooling in 1990, designed to reach the fourth year by 1994.

> Instructional materials, particularly textbooks, have been developed and tried out for the purpose of implementing fully the values education program at the secondary level. As in the elementary level, integration of values education is encouraged in all the other subject areas wherever possible. Certain value themes are given emphasis in each year level. For example, for First Year we emphasize values in relation to self, for Second Year values in relation to others, for Third Year, values in relation to nationalism, and for Fourth Year values in relation to spirituality (NIER, 1990, p. 93).

At the tertiary level, public and private colleges and universities have developed major fields of study in values education, providing B.S. and M.A. degrees in values education and graduate certificates in this field.

### Singapore

The 1979 proposal for creating a moral-education program in the schools (Ong Teng Cheong, et al.) formed the foundation for the curriculum that was first introduced into the lower primary grades in 1981 and subsequently was implemented by gradual stages in upper primary and secondary levels.

The program abides by the Ong report's recommendation that moral education be taught in the mother tongue at the primary school level "so as to preserve and transmit Asian moral values and cultural traditions" (Ganesamoorthy & Choo, 1985?, p. 2). The *mother tongue* for the majority of children would be Chinese and for a minority would be either Malay (for the indigenous peoples) or Tamil (for the Indian population). The One report proposed that teaching in the mother tongue rather than in English should be more effective in conveying Asian values because English was considered to be "an alien language." However, because English is the unifying language for Singapore's multilingual populace and a required subject of study in schools, learning materials in English would also be provided at both the primary and secondary levels.

To implement the program, the Ministry of Education prepared complete syllabi for all primary grades and through the first two levels of secondary school. At the upper secondary levels the new *religious knowledge* (partially comparative-religion) program was instituted as a compulsory subject, then in 1990 became an elective. "Religious Knowledge is intended to anchor the values acquired from [the primary school and the first two years of secondary school] through the study of an established religious/ethical system" (Ganesamoorthy & Choo, 1985?, p. 3).

At the primary level, the Ministry prepared two alternative programs entitled *Good Citizen* and *Being and Becoming*. Around 85% of schools have followed the *Good Citizen* program (which

includes teachers' guidebooks and pupil texts) and the remainder have adopted the *Being and Becoming* alternative (which has only a teachers' manual and no texts). The *Good Citizen* material directly teaches the moral values, whereas *Being and Becoming* uses a values clarification and assimilation approach. "The *Good Citizen* texts are based on stories. The *Being and Becoming* materials eschew the story-telling approach in favour of the values assimilation approach" (Ganesamoorthy & Choo, 1985?, p. 4). *Being and Becoming* has been the only moral-education program available in the first two years of secondary school.

## Conclusion

As the foregoing brief review demonstrates, a renewed interest in moral-values education in Asian societies has resulted in the creation of new moral-education classes at all levels of the schooling hierarchy in such countries as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. The fact that political leaders and educators accord the improvement of moral values high priority in the schools is reflected in the fact that in all four nations required classes have been established precisely for teaching moral values.

Although many of the values included in the syllabi of the education system are held in common in all four countries, it is also the case that unique characteristics of the four societies have resulted in notable differences in both the values espoused and the mode of implementing values instruction in the schools. It is also apparent that the four nations' programs are in a continuing state of development as forces in the societies press the educational establishments to shift their emphases among values and to produce instructional programs that result in desired changes in the thought patterns and behavior of children and youth.

## References


Bradsher, H. S. (1991) "Philippines." In D. Daume (Ed.). *Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year* (pp. 439-440). Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Daniel, P. (1988) "Two Basic Values to Secure Our Future," *Straits Times*, November 17.

Daume, D. (Ed.) (1991) *Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year*. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Davie, S. (1988) "Filial Piety the Most Important Value to Preserve, Says Jaya," *Straits Times*, November 20, 1988.

*Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1981-1985*. (1981) Kuala Lumpur: Government Press.

Ganesamoorthy, S., & Choo, H. (1985?) *Status of Moral Education in Schools* (mimeo). Singapore: Ministry of Education.

Gasmier, M. R. (1988) "Lessons in Asian Values to Begin in Primary Schools," *Straits Times*, November 21.

Gopinathan, S. (1988) "Being and Becoming: Education for Values in Singapore." In W. K. Cummings, S. Gopinathan, & Y. Tomoda (Eds.), *The Revival of Values Education in Asia and the West* (pp. 131-145). Oxford: Pergamon.

Hasan, M K. (1978) "The Developmental Significance of Islamic Education with Special Reference to Higher Institutions of Learning in Malaysia." In *Religion as a Field of Study and Research*. Jakarta: Ministry of Religious Affairs.

*Medium-term Philippine development plan 1987-1992* (1986) Manila: Government of the Philippines.

*Moral Education —Primary and Secondary School Syllabuses* (1984) Singapore: Ministry of Education.

Mukherjee, H. (1988) "Moral Education in a Developing Society: The Malaysian Case." In W. K. Cummings, S. Gopinathan, & Y. Tomoda (Eds.), *The Revival of Values Education in Asia and the West* (pp. 147-162). Oxford: Pergamon.

Mutalib, H. (1988) "it must Be Common, Broad, and Universal," *Straits Times*, November 11.

NIER (1990) *A New Decade of Moral Education.* Tokyo: National Institute for Educational Research.

NIER (1981) "Moral Education in Asia," *Research Bulletin of the National Institute for Educational Research* (No. 20).

Ong Teng Cheong, et al. (1979) *Report on Moral Education.* Singapore: Ministry of Education.

*Pendidikan Moral Pancasila,* Vols. 1-6. (1982-83) Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

*Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-1980.* (1976) Kuala Lumpur: Government Press.

Sutaria, M. C. (1989) "Values Education Framework." In Minda C. Sutaria, Juanita S. Guerrero, & Paulina M. Castaño (Eds.), *Philippine Education: Visions and Perspectives.* Manila: National Book Store, pp. 104-129.

Thomas, R. M. (1981) Indonesian education: Communist strategies (1950-1965) and governmental counter strategies (1966-1980). *Asian Survey, 21* (3), pp. 369-392.

Thomas, R. M. (1988) The Islamic revival and Indonesian education. *Asian Survey, 28* (9), pp. 897-915.

"Values Should Be Universal," (1988) *Straits Times,* November 18.

Whiting, K. L. (1984) "Discordant Notes Jar Malaysia's Communal Harmony," *Santa Barbara News-Press,* August 30, p. C-7.